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President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 126

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/791)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.54)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.54.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.54, entitled "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". The text outlines the links between our Organization and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and lays out a vision for the future with regard to issues on the multilateral agenda such as sustainable peace, rapid technological change and health.

With regard to the links between the United Nations and national parliaments, the relationship must ensure that international commitments are translated into national policies and laws that benefit everyone. In the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, one goal is to strengthen the ability of legislators to allocate budget resources aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Our text calls on the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU to engage in closer cooperation and mandates the Secretary-General to submit a report with a list of best practices to support parliaments. It also invites them to become more involved in the system by participating in the voluntary national reviews for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. More specifically, we have incorporated new perspectives, such as addressing the issue of violence against women in politics. We also emphasize the participation of young people in politics and acknowledged the contribution of the IPU to the preparatory process for a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

The work of the States Members of the United Nations would be futile without the efforts led by our parliamentarians to guide and determine the financing of national programmes that meet the Organization's goals. By strengthening the ties between legislators, the IPU and the United Nations, we can respond more effectively to the needs of our citizens. I therefore invite all delegations to support this draft resolution and proceed to its adoption.

Mr. Budhu (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, my delegation is pleased to be participating in today's plenary meeting to discuss agenda item 126, on the interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and also to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the subject (A/72/791).

At the very centre of any form of democracy stands a parliament. It enshrines the democratic values of a society, encompasses the principles and ideologies of freedom, human rights and the rule of law and safeguards transparency and accountability through political

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dialogue and concrete action. In essence, parliaments have the honourable task of ensuring Government by the people and for the people. In the performance of their functions of legislation, representation and oversight, parliaments can engage in developing and implementing laws and policies that promote democracy and good governance. However, good governance is not a luxury, but a fundamental requirement for achieving peace and security, economic and social empowerment and sustainable development, especially in the goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Parliaments can ensure that the principles of the 2030 Agenda are enshrined in national development strategies by translating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into enforceable national laws that respond to country-specific development priorities, monitoring their implementation and ensuring that Government is accountable to the people for national progress on the SDGs. In that regard, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago fully recognizes that national ownership of the SDGs is critical to ensuring that no one is left behind. However, one of the challenges facing the Agenda worldwide involves raising awareness of the global Goals, not only to the broad public but also to those in key positions of leadership and decision-making. In order to achieve that, the Goals must be localized from country to country through inclusive and participatory approaches, including open and transparent consultation in parliament. Shortly after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, therefore, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago passed a motion, with full bipartisan support, committing to helping to implement the Agenda through acts of legislation, including the national budget.

Following that, in 2017 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago laid its Vision 2030 national development strategy before Parliament. Vision 2030 is an ambitious strategic development plan that is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, comprehensive in scope and cross-cutting in nature in order to ensure that its implementation is coherent, integrative and collaborative. Recognizing the important role of representative participation by all citizens, the strategy aims to strengthen our democratic institutions. Mechanisms must be established by which citizens can participate in national decision-making, thereby making public policy more responsive to the needs of the population. That will involve strengthening the Office of the Parliament, establishing wider and more structured public consultations and enhancing citizen participation in governance through information and communications technology.

As a small island developing State (SIDS), Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General's report makes specific reference to the role of parliaments in the prevention of natural disasters. In that regard, following the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean last year, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with the United Nations country team in Port of Spain, hosted a regional parliamentarian retreat on building Caribbean resilience. The retreat focused on deepening the knowledge of parliamentarians on Caribbean resilience in the face of disasters and the policy strategy and guidelines necessary for building national- and regional-level resilience. One important session focused on the question of budgetary mechanisms and the funding of disaster-risk-reduction programmes that can adequately address the special circumstances and vulnerabilities facing Caribbean SIDS.

That multi-stakeholder initiative is just one example of the shift that is needed to achieve the SDGs. All stakeholders, from all arms of Government and corners of society, must be sufficiently empowered and provided with the relevant information and knowledge, education and training so that they can effectively and meaningfully participate in processes converging towards a common goal. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago commends the efforts of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), other national parliaments and the United Nations to provide support to translate the SDGs into action, and further supports deepening the interactions between the IPU and the United Nations as part of a broad multi-stakeholder approach to implementing an integrated and multidimensional 2030 Agenda. On that basis, Trinidad and Tobago would like to express its gratitude to the delegation of Mexico for leading us in the consultative process and is pleased to join with others in sponsoring draft resolution A/72/L.54.

Mr. Seddik (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to sincerely congratulate the delegation of Mexico for introducing draft resolution A/72/L.54, on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We welcome the fact that the text has been sponsored by several delegations.

I would like to reiterate our support for the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, and its Secretary General, Mr. Martin Chungong, and their remarkable efforts, and to commend the Organization's excellent relations with the IPU.

As a member of the IPU since 1977, the Algerian Parliament has made an active and constructive contribution to its work, in which I have the honour to participate as a member of the bureau of the IPU's Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs. That contribution has to do with all of the IPU's various areas of action and is based on a productive exchange of experience and best practices.

My country, Algeria, co-authored the text of draft resolution A/72/L.54, which, I need hardly point out, reflects the ever-growing significance of the role played by parliaments in the multilateral arena and highlights the importance of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments, represented by the worldwide organization of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in all the Organization's areas of activity. That cooperation, which is intended to have many aspects, covers major sectors of our societies with a direct impact on the daily lives of the citizens whom we represent and on their very exercise of citizenship, in accordance with the rule of law. They include democracy, human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women, the combating of violence against women, including in political life, young people's participation in peace and security, disarmament, non-proliferation, sustainable development and interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue, as well as the fight against terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism that can lead to terrorism.

This cooperation also contributes to our goals of achieving peace and resolving all conflict situations with the help of parliamentary diplomacy, its mechanisms and its potential, in the service of our peoples and nations. We, the parliamentarians, are effective instruments that we should never neglect to make use of. We look forward to the holding of the IPU world conference on interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue, with the participation of Heads of State, parliamentarians and representatives of various religions, and we support the draft resolution's call to involve the United Nations.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): Namibia would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/791) on draft resolution A/72/L.54. We also take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Mission of Mexico, as the country holding the presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and therefore the penholder of the draft resolution, for its initiative on agenda item 126.

The General Assembly has adopted this biannual resolution by consensus since 2004. That is clear testimony to the scope of the cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations, and demonstrates the importance of constructive partnership with parliaments as critical stakeholders in resolving today's global challenges. The draft resolution continues to encourage parliamentarians' deeper involvement in the work of the United Nations both as advisers and as implementers of decisions made in the Organization. Namibia is encouraged by the IPU's work in implementing and mobilizing Government actions across the planet towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are therefore happy that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have received special mention. For Namibia, a desert country dealing with the challenges of addressing the effects of both droughts and floods, those are essential instruments and frameworks for ensuring the positive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Namibia has achieved 47 per cent gender parity in its Parliament. While we continue to improve in the area of parliamentary and other local representation, we are pleased with the work of the IPU in the critical areas of gender equality, the empowerment of women and fighting violence against women. Those achievements cannot be underestimated, considering that less than 30 years ago, at the time of Namibia's independence, the percentage of women parliamentarians globally was at a mere 10 per cent. While that average has grown to almost 24 per cent today, there is still a long way to go and we must continue to encourage and support the IPU in its work in that area.

It is essential that when we make laws and policies, we ensure that the views of all stakeholders in society, including women and young people, are taken into account. It is for that reason that Namibia greatly appreciates the critical work done by the IPU in the areas of youth empowerment and ensuring the participation of young men and women in politics.

In conclusion, it is for those reasons, and those mentioned by our fellow States Members of the United

Nations present here today, that Namibia firmly supports the draft resolution and encourages unanimous support for its adoption.

Mr. Romero (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to participate in this meeting as a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), where I was recently elected President of the Committee on United Nations Affairs, and as a Senator of Argentina. At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude for the support that many countries have shown in promoting draft resolution A/72/L.54, introduced today.

The interrelationship between the United Nations, members of parliaments and the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is key. We are all partners in the common idea of helping our countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address other challenges. Through our parliaments, we have a role in drawing up plans and national strategies through parliamentary action and Government management so that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can become a reality, as well as in promoting transparency and overseeing management, both nationally and at other levels of Government.

Today we are navigating a complex world. It has therefore become crucial to enhance South-South cooperation, in the understanding that the economy should serve the people through comprehensive social policies. In the draft resolution introduced today we have a clear guide to help us make progress in working energetically to create public policies that are committed to supporting development with social goals that can benefit the majority of our citizens.

In 2001, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defined poverty as a lack of capacities, options, security and opportunities for enjoying an acceptable standard of living. In recent years, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals have influenced the discussion on fighting poverty at the global level. However, it has become clear that this discussion calls for local involvement on the part of every country and that appropriate national policies and concrete actions are required to achieve those Goals.

Every one of us has a role to play, especially when it comes to poverty reduction. The eradication of poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges facing humankind. While the number of people living in extreme poverty was halved from 1,900 million in 1990 to 830 million in 2015, many human beings continue to live in extreme poverty. While areas such as China and India account for a large part of poverty reduction, at the global level rapid global demographic growth has seen a more modest reduction in the number of people living in poverty. Progress in other regions has been limited. For example, in Latin America, poverty remains high, with around 29 per cent of the population living in poverty in 2015, up from 28.5 per cent in 2014, showing what a difficult task this is to achieve.

Child poverty is another of the most visible and distressing components of poverty because it deprives many millions of children of access to education as a way to overcome difficulties. A great deal remains to be done. However, we are encouraged when we see that it is possible when we look at countries that have managed to make progress by pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. Speaking of education, it is important to note that national growth is closely linked to access to education for children and young people. There can be no doubt that access to education is another important component of the fight against poverty.

Sustainable growth demands that we strengthen various productive links — agriculture, industry, the environment and technology. In the words of Amartya Sen, it is important to close educational gaps and remove disparities in access and inclusion to make the world more secure as well as more fair.

We need collective efforts to identify and share effective strategies and take action in all countries. Leaving no one behind means valuing the dignity of every human being. We must make progress at the community level a priority. Women, children, the fight for equality, the harsh realities of poverty — these are not only economic and financial issues, but together represent a challenge to be tackled head on and overcome. By investing more of ourselves each day as supporters and champions of this fight, we will generate new horizons for sustainable socioeconomic development. As legislators, we can work with our Governments to actively and resolutely uphold the commitments undertaken here. We can achieve the 2030 Agenda by formulating and pursuing a variety of legislative initiatives at the national level that reflect its transformative goals. We all share the responsibility to ensure that no one is left behind by working to promote the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Kuzmenkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would first like to thank the delegation of Mexico for its efforts in facilitating agreement on the text of draft resolution A/72/L.54, on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Our delegation has become a sponsor of this important draft resolution, which is aimed at strengthening interaction between the two organizations and national parliaments, which in turn can help to enhance the role of parliaments and foster mutual understanding and dialogue among States.

Russia attaches great importance to the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which makes a significant contribution to the development of parliamentary diplomacy. A non-politicized, mutually respectful and constructive exchange of views among parliamentarians facilitates effective solutions to contemporary international problems. In that regard, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and that representative inter-parliamentary organization is significant in the context of both reinforcing democracy and maintaining peace.

The draft resolution before us reflects two important initiatives: the establishment of an International Day of Parliamentarism and the holding of a world conference on interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue. We view the establishment of 30 June as the International Day of Parliamentarism as a milestone. We are pleased that in 2019 the international community will mark the 130th anniversary of the first Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which continues to be an authoritative forum for exchanging views in an atmosphere of equality and determination to reach decisions acceptable to all on a wide range of issues. As a multinational and multi-faith State, the Russian Federation believes firmly that the rise of new dividing lines, including those based on ethnic and religious differences, is pernicious. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the IPU's call for organizing a world conference on interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue jointly with the United Nations, with the participation of Heads of State, parliaments and representatives of major religions.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore the fact that imposing sanctions on parliamentarians is unacceptable. It is crucial to ensure that States that hold international events on their territory give people's representatives the opportunity to take part in them and express their views. For example, when Russia hosted the 137th IPU Assembly in Saint Petersburg in October 2017, we permitted unimpeded entry to parliamentarians from every country in the world, without exception, who expressed an interest in taking part. We hope to see a similar non-discriminatory approach taken by all States Members of the United Nations organizing similar international events on their territory.

The President: I now give the floor to the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Ms. Cuevas Barron (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the United Nations; the Inter-Parliamentary Union, composed of the leaders of Parliaments; my fellow parliamentarians all over the world and of course our organization's team for the opportunity to work on this draft resolution (A/72/L.54). I would like to express special thanks to the Permanent Mission of my own country, Mexico, which worked and pushed for this draft resolution on behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. I also thank the missions that have made tireless efforts in contributing ideas and comments and thereby enriching the text that we worked on during our most recent meeting in Geneva and that today has taken its final form as a draft resolution.

This is an important moment for the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Our partnership with the United Nations started 20 years ago in response to people's demands for more transparent, effective and accountable governance. As the forces of globalization have grown stronger, people everywhere have felt more vulnerable and left out of decision-making processes, not just at the local level but also in the international arena, which rarely offers concrete solutions to local problems. That is where the work of parliamentarians comes in, to ensure that the views and voices of those we represent can reach the United Nations and are in harmony with Member States so that they can deliver on their international commitments.

How far along are we in our journey? We can be very proud of the results we have achieved. While we have not yet reached our final destination, the truth is that every day we are redoubling our efforts. We are working on new ways of collaborating so that we can once again achieve effective action and an ambitious vision. Today, old and new conflicts can be found threatening peace and security all over the planet. Climate change is forcing thousands of people to leave their homes in search of security, food and a safe roof over their heads. While gender equality has

improved in some areas, the fact is that we are still far from fully realizing it, especially where women in politics are concerned. Income inequality has reached unprecedented levels and is eroding the foundations of the social contract that unites us and sustains our democracy. Politics everywhere is becoming more divisive and polarized, undermining people's trust. That gives us an important opportunity and duty to use our relationship as a key tool to transform these challenges into improved global governance.

As a long-serving parliamentarian, I know first-hand the importance of legislative work for getting results. Our work as parliamentarians is essential for ratifying international instruments and modifying our national legislation to make it reflect those commitments more accurately, especially in key areas such as human rights, the development agenda and climate change. And one of a legislator's most important jobs is preparing budgets. As parliamentarians we wield the most important tool for our countries' public policies. And, of course, it is our job to demand clear and timely accountability. In that way, we are the natural link between citizens, the people we represent and the global agenda. Secretary-General António Guterres, a former parliamentarian himself, understands the importance of engaging with parliamentarians in the decision-making process, and that is reflected in his report (A/72/791). We know how essential the participation of legislators is, just as the Inter-Parliamentary Union is such an essential link in all aspects of the United Nations system. We need citizens to be able to participate more closely in the United Nations system, especially when the Organization commits to working more closely with their representatives in its deliberations. That is when the results reflect the founding principle of the Charter of the United Nations, "we the peoples".

The Secretary-General's report highlights the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the United Nations in key areas such as democracy and human rights, peace and security, disarmament, gender equality and sustainable development. Today's draft resolution is a significant reflection of all that work and also opens the door to new areas of cooperation, including sustainable peace, inter-ethnic and interreligious dialogue and strategies for countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. The Inter-Parliamentary Union has already partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime through a joint programme to address the challenges of counter-terrorism and violent extremism, and above all to figure out how parliamentarians can take part in resolving them, especially where prevention is concerned.

Terrorism is a scourge that affects virtually the entire world. It should never be linked to any particular religion or region, nor should our societies ever accept it. Today our freedoms and democracies require that we carry out this important work. We will continue to do so alongside the United Nations so that, as legislators, we can do our best work to ensure that our laws can become tools to fight such threats to our democracies and freedoms.

As legislators and opinion-makers, parliamentarians have vital leadership roles in their countries. Our job, as the world organization of national parliaments, is to help create common ground among parliamentarians so that their voices across parties and genders can be articulated into a strong parliamentary perspective on global affairs. Our most important task is to ensure that, as representatives of the people, we work on solutions for all people everywhere and for the sustainability of the planet itself.

Through parliaments, the IPU promotes ideas and positive changes in United Nations processes, conventions and treaties. It also serves as a highly valuable resource for the United Nations, precisely because our work focuses on the implementation of these agreements. For instance, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the IPU and its 178 member States are working to ensure that the 17 Sustainable Development Goals can become a reality. We are particularly proud when it comes to Goal 16, because we are working to see concerted efforts made in favour of inclusivity, representation and transparent institutions for Governments. That means that parliamentarians should play a key positive role in realizing the changes envisioned under the 2030 Agenda. We do so through parliamentary hearings here at the United Nations, and in the various workshops we conduct in countries and regions around the world, where we focus directly on implementation, with a view to ensuring that the United Nations development agenda becomes a reality in all our communities.

Like the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union will continue working to ensure that absolutely no one is left behind. Among other things our work in the High-level Political Forum and with regard to voluntary national reviews is of great importance.

The IPU holds a side event designed to attract many parliamentarians so that they can get to know the United Nations better and work more closely with it. We also have a Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs and hold regional seminars with a view to ensuring that democratic governance always goes hand in hand with sustainable development and is integrated throughout our deliberations, decisions and actions. We also work with the various United Nations agencies to make these goals a reality.

Two years ago, in the previous iteration of our biannual resolution (resolution 70/298), the IPU committed to working with the United Nations on migration and the humanitarian agenda for refugees. Today that has become a reality. We devoted not only our annual hearing but also seminars, workshops, agreements and the most recent IPU Assembly in Geneva to ensuring that the voices of all parliamentarians from all countries, and the people they represent, are reflected in the IPU's work on the global compacts on migration and refugees. We believe that this debate should focus not on prejudices but on specific questions, and that agreements must be based on human rights, not xenophobic political narratives. We believe that the work of parliamentarians is crucial to ensuring that voices advocating safe and orderly migration are heard and that an agreement in favour of refugees, who have already suffered enough, can be reached and duly implemented in our countries. That work, begun two years ago, has now become a reality and brought results. The IPU has adopted important resolutions in this regard in the past year and a half. We are steadfastly committed to turning narratives of hatred and discrimination into one of the generosity and love that should unite this entire planet.

The IPU has a very important task in the area of women's empowerment and especially violence against women. While we realize there is a great deal to be done, we first want to welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, who has shown by example that inclusion is possible, and that it can produce results almost immediately. Our work both with the Commission on the Status of Women and in fighting the discrimination and harassment faced by many women in politics in their countries is increasingly important. We know that there is much to be done, even in terms of changing many of our parliamentary rules. The presence of women in parliaments increased by only by 0.1 per cent in the past year. At that rate, it would take more than 250 years to reach parity. Our daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters cannot afford that luxury. Today more than ever, we need to work for women, not just for those of us who already in politics and have a voice and a right to vote, but for all the women and girls who want to realize their dreams and, like us, transform their communities and the planet.

Parliaments worldwide must become more inclusive and representative. They must genuinely tackle the concerns of our societies. In this regard, the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians has an important task, through the Economic and Social Council and its Youth Forum, to ensure that the voices of young people are truly heard in these forums. We have a long way to go, but as a young parliamentarian and President of the IPU, I feel obliged to take on this agenda. I am an example of how we include young parliamentarians in our organization. Yes, I am still a young parliamentarian, and I feel the obligation to work to enhance the participation of young people in decision-making, in particular in terms of parliamentary access. People under the age of 30 account for more than 50 per cent of the world's population today, but only 1.9 per cent of its parliamentarians; three of four countries have laws prohibiting people under the age of 30 from running for political office.

I want to underscore and acknowledge a very important step taken with this draft resolution, in that we reached a historic consensus in favour of recognizing 30 June as the International Day of Parliamentarism. We hope that will enable recognition of the efforts, dedication and achievements of the more than 46,000 men and women parliamentarians around the world who work tirelessly every day to represent their communities, effect change and find solutions to the problems we face. The voices, hands and hearts of those 46,000 people are united through the IPU, working to leave the world a better, more inclusive, peaceful and just place for future generations.

The work of a parliamentarian comes with many challenges. Indeed, the hard work never ends. Many of our colleagues — and it is therefore important to recognize it — carry out their work with very limited means. Others are subject to criticism, interference or marginalization in their own countries, parliaments or parties. Others are illegally persecuted or silenced.

It goes without saying that the International Day of Parliamentarism proposed in the draft resolution

will also recognize the enormous efforts of women parliamentarians, who often have to work twice as hard to gain the least recognition.

I would also like to take advantage of this important forum because I believe that the General Assembly is a space that inspires, motivates and unquestionably compels us to become committed. This is a forum where all the countries of the world engage in dialogue. In it they find a place to reflect, take decisions and seek peace. But it should also be an exemplary forum for the Inter-Parliamentary Union, where we can work without exclusion and ensure that everyone can participate, where delegations represent a plurality and where women's voices are as powerful as men's. We will continue working and seeking the support of the United Nations so that we can ensure that all the events we hold here are representative of all the States members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We would like to continue to work here and to work with the United Nations to ensure that every agreement reached here can become a reality.

A few years ago, during one of the meetings of the General Assembly, we said that we must translate our words into action. That is why we are here. We are here because we are believe that we can transform our communities by taking action at the global level. I am honoured to have this opportunity to work with my fellow parliamentarians, to whom I am grateful for the long distances they have travelled to be here today. I believe that our two organizations will continue to work together to make a tangible, genuine and significant difference in the lives of people across the planet. Our goal is to transform reality, put an end to preventable misery and devote all of our parliamentary time and effort to ensuring that our communities, our countries and our planet continue to be in agreement on the goals of the United Nations agenda, so that we can preserve democracy and respect for the promotion of human rights and the voices of parliamentarians representing the people who enabled us to be here.

I thank you, Mr. President, for today's draft resolution, which will continue to assist those working with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and our parliamentarians.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 126.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.54, entitled "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in document A/72/L.54, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.54?

Draft resolution A/72/L.54 was adopted (resolution 72/278).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Ukraine has always considered the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to be the oldest inter-parliamentary institution and a uniquely authoritative one that, according to its statute, works for peace and cooperation among peoples, shares the objectives of the United Nations, supports its efforts and works in close cooperation with it.

Ukraine is a country whose Parliament plays a key role and is fully aware of its responsibility with regard not only to the peace and security of its own country, but also where international and regional peace and security are concerned. Since joining the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Ukraine has always proceeded on a basis of

respect for international law and strict implementation by all IPU member States of its statutory commitments and obligations.

At its October 2016 session in Geneva, the IPU Governing Council took the decision to accept the invitation of the Parliament of the Russian Federation to host the 137th IPU Assembly in Saint Petersburg in October 2017. That decision was taken against the backdrop of the brutal acts of military aggression being committed by the Russian Federation against its neighbours, which in our case led to the temporary occupation of 7 per cent of Ukrainian territory. Russia is now committing acts of aggression with all the hallmarks of war crimes in the Ukrainian Donbas and Syria, and most recently even in the United Kingdom. That is why the decision on the venue of the IPU Assembly has seriously undermined the credibility of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as an organization based on principles and values such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy, the non-use of force or the threat of force — in contravention of international law and the Charter of the United Nations — the non-recognition of territorial acquisitions resulting from the threat or use of force and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its members. It has also brought into question the IPU's commitment to acting in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The delegation of Ukraine therefore unfortunately has no choice but to dissociate itself from the consensus on General Assembly resolution 72/278, on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 126?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.